

7. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH A MESSY FAIT ACCOMPLI -- AND MUST MAKE THE BEST OF THE KHALQI LEADER WITH WORST IMAGE PROBLEM -- AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, THE "RULE OF LAW" STRATEGY MIGHT BE ONE OF THE FEW TRICKS LEFT IN SAFRONCHUK'S LIMP BAG OT GIVE THIS REGIME INCREASED POPULAR ACCEPTABILITY. IT WILL BE A TOUGH ACT TO SELL HOWEVER -- ESPECIALLY IF AMIN CANNOT BE CONTROLLED BY MOSCOW AND CONTINUES TO ACT AS A BRUTAL TYRANT. AMSTUTZ

TO RUEHOC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5708  
INFO RUEHJPC/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0701  
RUSSIA/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9342  
RUHQA/AMEMBASSY JDDA 0400  
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1830  
RUENGO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1930  
RUSSAC/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7431  
RUHNP/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3294  
RUHMT/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 0304  
RUHNGCA/CINCPAC  
RUFKWA/USMISSION USNATO 0078  
BT  
C O N F I D E N T I A L KASL 7003

002099

POL

CHRG  
ECON  
RF  
CHRN

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12065: XDS-4 9/22/99 (FLATIN, BRUCE A.) OR-M  
TAGS: PEPR, PINE, PGOV, PINS, SHUM, AF, UR  
SUBJ: (C) LOCAL SOVIET VIEWS ABOUT AFGHANISTAN'S NEW  
AMIN REGIME

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: A PROMINENT LOCAL SOVIET DIPLOMAT HAS DISCLAIMED ANY PRIOR SOVIET KNOWLEDGE OF HAFIZULLAH AMIN'S RECENT COUP. FURTHERMORE, THE SOVIET SAW A CHANCE THAT AFGHANISTAN WOULD NOW ENTER A POSITIVE PHASE "UNDER THE RULE OF LAW." END .  
SUMMARY.

3. AT A DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION ON SEPTEMBER 28, THE A/DCM HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT KABUL WITH SOVIET COUNSELOR VASSILY SAFRONCHUK, WHO IS REPORTED TO BE THE KEY SOVIET POLITICAL TROUBLE-SHOOTER IN AFGHANISTAN. SAFRONCHUK MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ABOUT THE MID-SEPTEMBER COUP OF HAFIZULLAH AMIN:

A. SOVIET EMBASSY HAD ABSOLUTELY NO FOREKNOWLEDGE ABOUT AMIN'S MOVE AGAINST THE MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE CABINET OR AGAINST FORMER PRESIDENT TARAKI.

B. AMIN'S MAIDEN SPEECH OF SEPTEMBER 17 WAS "VERY IMPORTANT" AND "SHOULD BE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY." AMIN WAS GOING TO BRING FORTH A CONSTITUTION -- "BECAUSE FOREIGN COUNTRIES EXPECT EVERY GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD TO HAVE A CONSTITUTION."

C. AMIN HAD PROMISED THAT "HENCEFORTH, THERE WILL BE NO ARBITRARY ARRESTS IN AFGHANISTAN." FURTHERMORE, AMIN HAS ESTABLISHED A SPECIAL COMMISSION OF THE KAM (THE AFGHAN SECRET POLICE) TO STUDY THE FILES OF CURRENT POLITICAL PRISONERS AND RELEASE THOSE "BEING HELD WITHOUT CAUSE." WHEN THE A/DCM OBSERVED THAT TARAKI AND AMIN HAVE ALWAYS TOLD FOREIGN NEWS CORRESPONDENTS THAT "NO ONE HAS BEEN ARRESTED IN THIS COUNTRY WITHOUT A REASON," SAFRONCHUK SMILED, AND REPLIED, "THAT IS A MATTER OF SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENT." (COMMENT: HIS CLEAR IMPLICATION WAS THAT THE "REASON" OF YESTERDAY MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE THE "CAUSE" OF TODAY.)

D. THE ENTIRE PROGRAM SET FORTH BY AMIN COULD BE RECORDED AS PLACING AFGHANISTAN "UNDER THE RULE OF LAW."

E. AMIN SHOULD BE GIVEN FAIR CHANCE TO PROVE THAT HE MEANS WHAT HE SAYS.

4. SAPHRONCHUK ALSO EXPRESSED IRRITATION OVER RECENT USG STATEMENTS ABOUT SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS NORTH OF THE OKUS AND THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET TROOPS AT BAFRAW AIR BASE NORTH OF GAZI. HE NEGATED SUCH STATEMENTS AS "UNHELPFUL." THE A/DCN REMINDED HIM THAT THE USG STATEMENT ALSO CONTAINED A REPETITION OF U.S. VIEWS ABOUT FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF AFGHANISTAN. SAPHRONCHUK MADE NO COMMENT.

5. SAPHRONCHUK ALSO COMPLAINED ABOUT THE EXCESSIVE ATTENTION HE HAS BEEN RECEIVING IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS. HE SAID THAT HE DOES NOT LIKE TO BE IDENTIFIED AS "THE CHIEF SOVIET TROUBLE-SHOOTER" HERE -- AND WONDERED WHETHER THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS PUBLICITY. THE A/DCN OBSERVED THAT, AS A FELLOW DIPLOMAT, HE COULD WELL UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE SAPHRONCHUK'S ANNOYANCE OVER SEEING HIS NAME SO OFTEN IN PRINT -- AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY RESPECTED HIS PROFESSIONAL PRIVACY.

6. COMMENT: SAPHRONCHUK ALMOST GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE, HIMSELF, HAD WRITTEN ANIN'S SEPTEMBER 17 SPEECH. HE WAS VERY FAMILIAR WITH EVERY SMALL DETAIL.

7. IF IT IS TRUE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN SUDDENLY SEIZED WITH A BLESSY FAIT ACCOMPLI -- AND MUST HAVE THE BEST OF THE "ALGI LEADS" WITH AGENT STAFF MOVED -- AT LEAST IN THE VERY RUN, THE "RULE OF LAW" STRATEGY MIGHT BE ONE OF THE TRICKS LEFT IN SAPHRONCHUK'S LIMP AG TO GIVE THIS REGIME ENOUGH POPULAR ACCEPTABILITY. HE WILL BE A THICK ACT TO TELL -- ESPECIALLY IF ANIN C. HAD BEEN RECALLED BY USG. -- NO PROBLEM TO SEE AS A CAPITAL THREAT. ANIN C.